

# A New Twist on an Old Concept

ACC reincarnates its management evaluation team

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HQ ACC

Solutions through teamwork — that's the goal of Air Combat Command's new Civil Engineer Management Assistance Team. CEMAT members are visiting civil engineer squadrons to review management processes and offer solutions, identify best practices, share success stories and even provide training.

Today's CEMAT is a resurrected and reincarnated version of CE core

objective was to promote the sensibility of the merger to wing leadership and ensure proper use of resources. However, by the mid-1980s a changing Air Force focus led to discontinuation of the CESMET process at Air Staff level, and it eventually disappeared as an engineering and services management tool.

By the late 1990s Air Force Civil Engineering was a much different force than it was during the Cold War era. Base closures, manpower reductions, organizational realignments and privatization efforts resulted in a much smaller force, in many cases exacerbating the challenges associated with infrastructure management. In an effort to make this smaller force as efficient as possible and promote sound management practices, Pacific Air Forces resurrected the CEMAT concept in 2000. PACAF structured its CEMAT concept of operations around a review of CE unit compliance checklists. Benchmarking off PACAF's lead, ACC also instituted a command CEMAT, publishing its concept of operations in late 2001 and beginning base visits in February 2002.

ACC's CEMAT effort provides management assistance, via a team of functional experts, to CE squadron personnel, primarily in the operations and engineering flights. Its purpose is to review management processes, identify best practices, share success stories and provide recommendations on how to improve operational performance. The core team, led by the deputy chief of the ACC Operations and Infrastructure Division, consists of functional experts from the Operations, Programs and Construction Divisions. Representatives from other divisions are added at the base's request.

CEMAT's objective evaluation of a squadron's performance includes on-the-spot training and/or recom-

mendations to improve management processes. In addition, the team highlights best practices and commendable items that are recommended for adoption across the command.

Visits are ideally scheduled within the first few months of a new squadron commander's arrival. This allows the commander to develop a sense of what areas may need assistance. The visits typically last a week and are kept very informal. A table-top out-brief is provided to the CE squadron commander at the end of the week, and no follow-up action is required to close any of the items addressed. ACC's goal is to visit each base on a two-year cycle, coinciding with the typical commander's tenure.

With eight bases visited so far, results to date are very promising. The ACC CEMAT team identified 17 best practices in the first year, including use of commercial solicitations to reduce bid times and improve coordination with electronic routing; employment of co-op students in non-traditional roles (resources and environmental); use of Facility Maintenance Teams to sustain high-use, high-visibility facilities; and the innovative use of emerging technologies to improve the efficiency of facility management practices. Additionally, the team identified several common trends to be addressed at the headquarters level concerning training shortfalls, excessive civilian personnel lapse rates and an aging vehicle fleet.

The CEMAT initiative is a win-win concept for the command and CE squadron commanders alike. It is paying great dividends by validating our business practices and ensuring our processes are being executed in an effective manner.

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**Newly assigned commanders are lauding the objectivity that CEMAT's outside perspective offers. As Lt Col Scott Jarvis, 366th CES commander, Mountain Home AFB, ID, commented to Brig Gen Patrick Burns, the ACC Civil Engineer:**

*"...CEMAT proved extremely worthwhile ... they highlighted some issues that we were aware of, but in addition, uncovered many other items that we were not ... their expertise and hard work will bear fruit here at Mountain Home. The timing was great and I highly recommend the effort for the rest of the command!"*

For more information, log on to the ACC CEMAT website:  
<https://ce.acc.af.mil/CEO/CEMAT/CEMAT%20web%20page.htm>

headquarters teams from years past. During the mid-1970s and early 1980s, Headquarters Air Force and several major commands formally established Civil Engineering Management Evaluation Teams and later, Civil Engineering and Services Management Evaluation Teams.

CEMET visits were conducted to assess day-to-day operation and management of civil engineer squadrons and ensure that required CE manpower was properly justified for new initiatives. CESMET came into being shortly after the merger of Civil Engineering and Services. Its